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AUTHOR	Zelnio, Barbara
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ABSTRACT

The Early Employee Selector Program (EESP) at Peirce College (Pennsylvania) combines some features of a traditional co-op experience with a strong mentoring component. Ninety percent of the students at this urban two-year college are first generation college students. Placement at the work site occurs after one academic semester, and, unlike traditional co-op programs, students may be placed continuously with one employer in order to allow the student to assume increasing responsibilities. The student has both a workplace mentor and a college mentor to provide maximum support. The college mentor offers support for academic and personal problems, can advocate for the student, and serve as a role model. Students are also involved in focus groups, field trips, and serve as peer mentors themselves. Career development and employment issues are discussed on an ongoing basis. Evaluation showed that the EESP program has a positive impact on students. Students who are provided with school and work experience get higher grades, stay in college and complete their course of study, and can secure employment more easily. For students completing the EESP program, 100 percent either continued their education or were placed in a job; the corresponding rate for co-op students is 85 percent. Appended is a 38-page formal evaluation of the EESP program by Claire Conway and Mary Conway. (SW)

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The Early Employee Selector Program

Grantee Organization:

Peirce Junior College
changed to
Peirce College
1420 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 545-6400

Grant Number:

P116B11518

Project Dates:

Starting Date:	September 1, 1991
Ending Date:	August 31, 1994
Number of Months:	36

Project Director:

Barbara Zelnio
Career Development Services
Peirce College
1420 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Telephone: (215) 545-6400 ext. 278

FIPSE Program Officer(s): Jay Donahue

Grant Award:	Year 1	$ 79,213
	Year 2	$ 71,286
	Year 3	$ 72,419
	Total	$222,918

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Summary

The Early Employee Selector Program
Peirce College
1420 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 545-6400
Barbara Zelnio, Director of Career Services
Leslie Gladden, Business/Education Liaison EESP

The Early Employee Selector Program (EESP) combines the features of a traditional co-op experience with a strong mentoring component. Identification of students and placement at the work-site occur sooner than the traditional co-op model which lasts two semesters, and unlike co-op, students may be placed continuously with one employer. This allows the student and employer to develop a strong professional relationship, and the chance for the student to assume increasing responsibilities.

Not only does the student have a workplace mentor, but each student is also assigned a college mentor. This provides maximum support for the student, especially, first generation students who lack role models. The college mentor offers support for academic and personal problems, can advocate for the student with the workplace mentor and acts as a role model. In addition to mentoring, students are involved in focus groups, field trips, and serve as peer mentors themselves. Career development and employment issues are discussed on an ongoing basis. The evaluation shows that EESP has a positive impact on students and coupled with co-op, this school-to-work model has optimal effect. Those who complete of the program show a 100% rate of placement, either in a job, or further education.

Executive Summary

The Early Employee Selector Program
Peirce College
1420 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 545-6400
Barbara Zelnio, Director of Career Development Services
Leslie Gladden, Business/Education Liaison EESP

Project Overview

The Early Employee Selector Program (EESP) at Peirce College combines the features of a traditional co-op experience with a strong mentoring component. Identification of students and placement at the work-site occurs after one academic semester. This allows the student and employer to develop a strong professional relationship, and gives the student a chance to assume increased responsibilities.

Not only does the student have a workplace mentor, but each student has a college mentor. This provides maximum support for the student, especially for, first generation college students who lack role models. In addition to mentoring, students are involved in focus groups, field trips, and they also serve as peer mentors. Career development and employment issues are discussed on an ongoing basis. Evaluation shows that EESP has a positive impact on students, and coupled with co-op, this school-to-work model has optimal effect.

Purpose

The main objective of the project is to give students more work experience and a more comprehensive system of support. Traditional co-op is available to students in the second year of college while the EESP offers work placement sooner. The most crucial part of the EESP is mentoring. Not only does the student have a workplace mentor, but a college mentor is assigned to work with the student. This allows the student and employer to develop a strong professional relationship, and the chance for the student to assume increasing responsibilities. Included in this design are focus groups for students who discuss and resolve school/work related problems.

Central to the philosophy of EESP is the idea that students learn more from being involved with their field in a mentee position, and that learning includes experiential, modelling, and written and verbal instruction. This program has the duel aims of helping students secure employment for which they are qualified after school, and to provide the Philadelphia area business community with highly skilled workers.

Background and Origins

Peirce College, located in center-city Philadelphia, is a fully accredited, private, independent, non-profit, two-year college specializing in business education. Ninety percent of the students are first generation college students. Eighty percent are women, 57% are minorities and approximately 85% are financially disadvantaged and receive some type of financial aid.

Peirce was informed by several major employers in the early 1990's that the poor communication skills, knowledge and attitudes of students were serious impediments to both initial employment and subsequent promotion on the job. At that time the dropout rate in Philadelphia was 51% for students attending public schools. Needless to say, students attending area college needed extensive support to succeed and remain in school.

Based on this information, Peirce developed a program called the Early Identification Program. The initial proposal was to provide job related training and education for students all along the educational pipeline;

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from high school, through two years of work, individual and group mentoring, training and employment, and possible loan forgiveness of tuition loan indebtedness.

The project began as an extended cooperative education program that included an advanced placement summer bridge program awarding 6 college credits, loan forgiveness, mentoring, and paid work-experience for students. Originally, the project was targeted to newly graduated high school seniors from city high schools in Philadelphia. As the program was implemented, several factors were discovered that changed the design of the program and forced other institutional changes.

When high schools students were offered a placement test before entering the summer program, it was discovered that 82% were in need of remedial courses and could not be offered advanced placement. This discovery lead to the expansion of services at the College. An Individual Developmental Education Advisement (IDEA) center was formed to offer structured courses and tutoring for remedial students. This changed the focus for recruitment. Students completing the first semester who received a GPA of 2.5 or better were invited to join the Early Employee Selector Program.

Another aspect that required change was the loan forgiveness component of the original proposal. The economic climate in Philadelphia in the early 1990's downturned which decreased employment opportunities as area corporations downsized. Small and medium sized businesses were approached with great success but most were unable to extend loan forgiveness.

Full coordination of the program is placed under the Director of the Career Development Services. A Business/Education Liaison serves as the corporate contact person for the program and students and provides mentoring instruction to collegiate and employer mentors.

Project Description

Student Eligibility - Students are selected based on their G.P.A. after one academic semester and a personalized letter of congratulations is forwarded to all eligible candidates. A student orientation is held to outline the program and student responsibilities. Resume writing and interviewing assistance is provided since students are initially selected by employers based upon their resume and through the interviewing process.

Job Development - Job development is crucial for success. The methods utilized are as follows: classified ads, networking, corporate referrals, cold calling and using faculty, staff, students and alumni as a source. Once contact is made, the program benefits are discussed, a customized proposal is created, resumes are selected and the mentor selection process and responsibilities are reviewed.

Peirce Mentors - To select college mentors, a memorandum is issued providing an overview of the program, its benefits and the importance of the mentor role. Interested candidates are urged to contact the Business Education Liaison.

Mentor Training - Mentor training is required for all collegiate and business mentors. The training provides a practical hands-on experience in a friendly group environment administered by trained professionals. These bi-annual sessions allow the mentors to meet and discuss their experiences while receiving information and direction.

Student Focus Group Meetings - These are designed for the students to have a forum to share issues, ideas, and concerns. Peer counseling evolved as a result of these meetings.

Mentor Focus Group Meetings - From the beginning this was a great idea, but due to time constraints it has been difficult to organize. Thus memoranda and subsequent telephone contact and a monthly update letter helps to maintain a strong relationship with the mentors.

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Educational Seminars and Field Trips - Seminars are designed to provide information which will assist the student in their educational, professional and personal development. Field trips are designed to increase the students' understanding of the business world as a whole. Mentors are urged to attend which allows for the further development and strengthening of the mentor/protege relationship.

Annual Luncheon/Recognition Dinner - These events are designed to promote interaction between students and their mentors. Issues relevant to the EESP and other school-to-work programs are discussed. The recognition dinner acknowledges and congratulates graduates and recognizes the mentors for their support.

Evaluation - Summative and formative evaluations were utilized to evaluate the EESP program. Various qualitative and quantitative information was collected to identify successes and addresses concerns. A file was maintained for each student which included mentor evaluations, a copy of *My Vocational Situation*, pre- and post statistical surveys, student evaluations and transcripts.

Evaluation/Project Results

An evaluation performed by Conway Associates found that EESP gave the students an opportunity to reach their academic and career potential. Students cited increased job skills, increased self-confidence and self awareness, increases in knowledge of the business world, the greater achievement of career learning goals, the integration of classroom and work experience, and the ability to secure a position upon graduation as gains attributed to the completion of the EESP program. When salaries were compared by three groupings, those with EESP, those with Co-op, and those with no program, EESP scored highest at $17,777. Placement rates were the most significant. These rates reflect either job placement, or transfer to a four year school, or alternative schooling upon graduation. In ascending order, EESP was 100%, Co-op was 85%, and no program was 32%.

Mentors commented that the program was of benefit not only for the student but the relationship also improved them by forcing the mentor to be more aware of the business community and current trends. Many mentors expressed personal satisfaction because they were able to help.

Summary and Conclusions

Clearly, the EESP is a forerunner of the new "School-to-Work" legislation. In reviewing the results, students who are provided with school and work experience tend to get higher grades, complete their course of study, and more easily secure employment after graduation. For first generation college students, the mentoring component is vital for success. Mentors provide the informal and important kinds of education traditionally passed between colleagues and family members. EESP has proved to be a win-win program for students, mentors, employers and the college. The partnerships and alliances that are formed through the program allow each sector of the school-to-work system to interact and improve upon the transition from college to the business world.

Available Information

Peirce College produced a videotape which is available for others interested in establishing a similar program. Copies of the final report are also available and may be obtained by contacting:

Barbara Zelnio
Director, Career Development Services
Peirce College
1420 Pine Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 545-6400
or
Leslie Gladden
Business/Education Liaison

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The Early Employee Selector Program: Final Report, 1994

Project Overview

The project began as an extended cooperative education program that included an advanced placement summer bridge program awarding 6 college credits, loan forgiveness, mentoring, and paid work experience for students. In coordination with the business academies of the Philadelphia public schools, students would take advanced placement college courses the summer after graduation, and could begin college with six credits. Not only would students gain academic experience at the college level, but they would be exposed to the college environment. Originally, the project was targeted to newly graduated high school seniors from city high schools. As the program was implemented, several factors were discovered that changed the design of the program and forced other institutional changes.

When students were offered a placement test before entering the summer program, it was discovered that of 122 students, 100 were in need of remedial courses and could not be offered advanced placement. This number reflected an 82% rate within the pool of students. Even though these students received good marks in high school, their skills were not strong enough to tackle college work. This discovery lead to yet another problem. The remediation rate at the college had risen dramatically for all incoming students. This change led to the expansion of services. An Individual Developmental Education Advisement center was formed to offer structured courses and tutoring for remedial students. This changed the focus for recruitment and the summer program. In the beginning phases of the program, student participation was low, so as a recruitment tool, students completing the first semester who received a GPA of 2.5 or better were invited to join the Early Employee Selector Program. This shifting in entrance requirements to the program allowed students to maximize their work experience.

In 1991, of 22 Philadelphia Fortune 500 companies, only 11 ranked higher in 1991 than in 1990. Of that number, only one ranked a single digit rating. Employers who were partners in the program were vital to its survival, and area economic forces caused many companies to downsize. This development led to the change in the original policy clause of employer loan forgiveness. The policy was changed to a voluntary condition, rather than a mandatory one. In response to the downturn in employment and the economy in general, negotiations for loan forgiveness were weighed against the financial strength of the company or corporation.

Purpose

The objective of the project is to offer students a longer continuum of work experience and a more comprehensive system of support. Traditional co-op is available to students in the second year of college and usually is comprised of two different co-op work

experiences. The Early Employee Selector Program (EESP) offers work placement after the successful completion of one semester, and is continuous until graduation. The most crucial part of the EESP is mentoring. Not only does the student have a workplace mentor, but a college mentor is assigned to work with the student. Included in this design are focus groups for students who discuss and resolve school/work related problems.

The glaring issue that occurred repeatedly is that of commitment and the importance of structure. Through the establishment of proposals for employers and students, the expectations are documented and the duties outlined, so that everyone is aware of who does what, where and when. Equally important, is to have a roster of students, employers, and mentors in place. This ensures the efficient implementation of the project, and the attainment of the objectives and results. Just as important is the development of flyers, brochures and informational pieces. This is a great help in selling the program.

Another important aspect is the design of forms and data instruments needed to track the kind of information needed for evaluation. They must be consistent with the evaluation plan. The surveys and other tools should also change accordingly when the subject of analysis changes.

Background and Origins

Peirce College, located in the heart of center-city Philadelphia, is a fully accredited, private, independent, non-profit , two-year college specializing in business education. Since its founding in 1865, Peirce has steadfastly maintained a clear and distinctive mission - to provide practical (occupationally-oriented) business-oriented educational programs primarily to first-generation college students who seek the necessary skills for entry into the work world. Peirce interprets its historical mission as servicing two distinct audiences: students, traditional and nontraditional, who seek marketable skills, a college degree and a career in business, and the employers within its service area (Metropolitan Philadelphia) that need competent, technologically literate and productive employees to ensure their success.

As a small, urban institution of 1,100 students, the student population closely mirrors the projected makeup of the Workforce 2000, with 80% women and 57% minority enrollment. Approximately 85% of the total students are financially disadvantaged and receive some type of financial aid. Ninety percent of the students are first generation college students.

Peirce was informed by several major employers in the early 1990's that the poor communication skills, knowledge and attitudes of students were serious impediments to both initial employment and subsequent promotion on the job. At that time the dropout rate in Philadelphia was 51% for students attending public schools. Needless to say, students attending area colleges such as Peirce needed extensive support to succeed and remain in school. The lack of education is critical in Philadelphia. According to the 1990 US Census,

the total population for Philadelphia county is 1,585,577. Of this number 119,840 have less than a ninth grade education; 291,904 have an education level of less than a high school diploma. Males unemployed aged 16 or above was 173,195 and in this category, females number 311,392. All persons living below the poverty line numbered 313,374 and all families living below the poverty line was 61,253.

Based on this information, Peirce conceived a program called the Early Identification Program. The initial proposal was to provide job related training and education to primarily underprivileged, urban-based students all along the educational pipeline; from high school, through two years of work, individual and group mentoring, training and employment, and possible loan forgiveness of tuition loan indebtedness. As a result of input from many sources, including area businesses, the Philadelphia High School Business Academy, Peirce administrators, faculty, and students, the Early Employee Selector Program (EESP) was created with funding from FIPSE.

Central to the philosophy of EESP is the idea that students learn more from being involved with their field in a mentee position, and that learning includes experiential, modelling, and written and verbal instruction. This program has the duel aims of helping students secure employment for which they are qualified after school, and to provide the Philadelphia area business community with highly skilled workers.

A summer program was designed to introduce students from the Philadelphia Business Academy to Peirce and to explain the Early Employee Selector Program to interested students. A series of summer workshops took place in May and ended in September of 1991. Attendance during this summer offering was less than hoped for, only 10 students attended. The summer program was designed to offer advanced placement to students, however, when a proficiency test was administered by the Admissions department some surprising results were found. Of five schools tested, or 122 students, remediation was indicated for 100 students. This number reflected 82% of the pool of students. The high percentage of remedial students influenced the institution to establish the Individual Development Education Advisment(IDEA) Center and a formalized Developmental Education Program. As a result, recruitment of students changed focus to in house and students with a grade point average of 2.5 or better after their first semester were invited to participate in the program.

Another aspect that required change was the loan forgiveness component of the original proposal. The economic climate in Philadelphia, as in the rest of the nation in the early 1990's, downturned. Employment opportunities decreased as area corporations downsized their workforces. This resulted in a smaller pool of employers able to participate in the program, especially the large corporations. Small to medium sized businesses were approached with great success but most were not in a position to extend loan forgiveness to the participating students.

The initial program was managed and coordinated by dividing responsibilities between

the Career Development Services and the Admissions offices. This arrangement was altered when the recruitment of participating students was internalized. Full coordination of the program was placed under the Director of the Career Development Services. One individual, a Business/Education Liaison, was hired in the Career Development office to serve as the corporate contact person for the program and students and to provide mentoring instruction to faculty and employer mentors. By the end of the first year, the first round of students were interviewed for placement and seven secured positions with three organizations, CoreStates Bank, and the law firms of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius, and Manta and Welge. Since that time, the program has been managed through the Career Development Services office following the features which are described in detail in the following sections.

Project Description

The EESP was designed to provide practical work experience along with an academic program, while providing a mentoring component to aid the student's development. Beginning the second year, the program operated in virtual obscurity, therefore, a marketing program was launched to increase community awareness i.e., students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding businesses. A variety of techniques were utilized from posting flyers to cold calling businesses. As a result of these efforts, student participation increased to 15 while employer participation increased by 100%. The next challenge was to provide structure to the program. The initial seven students received positions without fully understanding their responsibilities. For a brief period, the program was without a Business Education Liaison, which resulted in the lack of structure. Once the position was filled, there was no commitment to the overall program by the students. The relationship with those students needed to be cultivated and, the program's purpose reviewed. This led to the development of the following forms:

- Student Agreement, which lists the students responsibilities;
- a Training Agreement, which lists student and employer contact information, along with the employment start date, and starting salary, and demographic information for statistical purposes; and
- a questionnaire, which addresses job satisfaction, and issues or concerns.

Based upon the experience with the first group of students, it was determined that a closer bond between student and the Business Education Liaison needed to be formed immediately in order to foster a positive relationship. As a result, once a student receives a position, a meeting is scheduled to explain the program, select a mentor, and to develop their file. The student handbook, paperwork ,and journal are received and reviewed.

Student Eligibility:

Initially, students were selected based on faculty referrals. They were then contacted by phone, the program was discussed and interested candidates were urged to submit an error free resume. Since the verbal contact is a very time consuming process, a personalized letter

of congratulations was developed and forwarded to all eligible candidates in an attempt to expedite the selection process. A student orientation is held to outline the program and student responsibilities. Resume writing and interviewing assistance is provided on an as needed basis. Students who do not follow through with scheduled interviews are required to send a letter of apology to that employer and to the Business Education Liaison before they are given further consideration in the program. Students who are initially selected by employers based upon their resume proceed through the interviewing process. Upon receiving a job offer, the students are urged to accept those offers which are reasonable. Rejected offers are subsequently reviewed by the Business Education Liaison to determine that the rejection had merit.

Job Development:

Due to the increased awareness of the program, job development is a crucial aspect for success. The methods utilized are as follows: classified ads, networking, corporate referrals, cold calling using business' directories and using faculty, staff, students and alumni as a network source. Once contact is made, the program benefits are discussed with the employer. The employer submits their criteria for the position. A customized proposal is created, resumes are selected, and a site visit is scheduled . During the site visit, the program is discussed in detail, while the mentor selection process and responsibilities are further reviewed. This provides a forum for an exchange of ideas and helps to solidify the business/education relationship. The selected corporate mentor and supervisors are informed of the required mentor training and a commitment to the program is obtained from the employer.

Peirce Mentors:

The Peirce mentor recruiting process was similar to the initial student recruiting process, in that, it was one on one, selective and time consuming. Initially, individuals were chosen at random without any system in place. Many in the Peirce community were unaware that the program existed or its purpose, which resulted in minimal interest. To address this issue, a memorandum was drafted to provide an overview of the program, its benefits and the importance of their role as a mentor. Interested candidates were urged to contact the Business Education Liaison for further information. The implementation of recruiting procedures helped to market the program to the entire Peirce community, while developing the sense of a team environment.

Mentor Training:

Mentor training provides a practical hands-on learning experience in a friendly group environment administered by trained professionals. It is designed to allow the mentors to meet and discuss their experiences while receiving information and direction. Training is required for all mentors and a refresher course is recommended in order to remain current and well informed. These bi-annual sessions are always a great success. Once the training

invitations have been forwarded, follow-up is needed to ensure good turn out because corporate mentors have experienced difficulty in attending. The initial group of mentors, due to recruiting procedures, were not committed to the program which resulted in low attendance. Like their student protegees, they lacked the thorough understanding of the program's mission and their crucial role in its success. Special one-on-one attention via phone calls and site visits helped to develop and strengthen these relationships. Scheduling can also prove to be crucial. Plenty of advance notice is needed to allow the corporate mentors time to make arrangements to participate. Mentor training has thus become a routine portion of the program.

Student Focus Group Meetings:

The focus group meetings are designed for the students to have a forum to share issues, ideas, and concerns. Initially, the student focus group meetings were under attended due to a lack of commitment to the program. To address this situation, a monthly student update letter was hand delivered by workstudy students in order to inform the participants of all upcoming events and activities. Students were also called at work a few days prior to the meetings as a reminder. Attendance slowly increased. In order to gain full commitment, students were involved in the planning process of all future focus group meetings. Peer counseling evolved as a result of a free flow of discussion. The students realized they had many issues and concerns in common. Students started to help each other with conflict resolutions. The student focus group meetings are currently well attended and participation has also increased significantly.

Mentor Focus Group Meetings:

From the beginning this has been a great idea, but it is very difficult to implement. In a society that never seems to have enough time to get things done, this has been a component with very little success. Many of our strongest employer participants have been small to medium size businesses. A small office staff often does not allow much time away from the office, thus memoranda and subsequent telephone contact is necessary to maintain a strong relationship with the mentors. This is an issue that needs to be further addressed.

Educational Seminars and Field Trips:

The seminars and field trips are bi-annual events which provide an opportunity to expose the EESP participants to a variety of concepts, ideas, and locations. These seminars focus primarily on the information which will assist the student in their educational, professional, and personal development. Field trips are designed to increase the students' understanding of the business world as a whole. Corporate mentors and Peirce mentors are urged to attend these special events, which allows for the further development and strengthening of the mentor/protege relationship. To ensure a large turnout, advertising, advance notification, and telephone follow-up are required. Co-sponsoring an event with another department or encouraging participation of the entire student population ensures

better attendance and aids in the marketing efforts.

Annual Luncheon/Recognition Dinner:

The annual luncheon promotes the interaction between students and their collegiate and corporate mentors. A guest speaker discusses issues that are relevant to the EESP and other school-to-work programs. The recognition dinner heightens morale and promotes self-esteem in the participants. Graduates are acknowledged and congratulated on a job well done. Mentors are recognized for supporting their proteges growth and development. Members of the academic community and administration are also invited to share in the day's festivities. Both events encourage interaction among the students, the educational faculty and staff, and the business community. Planning is once again the key to success. Site selection, requesting competitive bids, developing flyers and invitations, scheduling, etc., will contribute to the overall success of these events provided they are accomplished with ample lead time.

Evaluation:

Only through a thorough evaluation can a program's success be gauged. Both summative and formative evaluations were utilized initially to evaluate the EESP program. The EESP used various qualitative and quantitative information to identify successes and address concerns. A file is maintained for each student which includes, but is not limited to, mentor evaluations, a copy of the instrument *My Vocational Situation*, pre-and post statistical surveys, student evaluations, and transcripts. In the initial stages of the program, there was minimal data collected, but through trial and error additional tools were developed and implemented. An outside, independent evaluator was employed to assess the data collected. (Please see Appendix for the formal evaluation.)

The following information highlights the results:

Tracking GPA's and earnings were initially the criteria examined. Reviewing the assessment tools indicated, there was much more to be considered. Student participants felt the program assisted in reaching academic and career potential. Increased job skills, self confidence and awareness, applying classwork to a practical situation, and improved awareness to the business world were reasons cited. The mentoring relationship was also clearly reviewed by the students as being beneficial. Students stated their mentor helped "Making difficult choices easier and offered relevant preparation and continuing encouragement" and "Was always there when I needed her". One student said that "Without my mentors, I would be lost".

The second theme regarding the mentor/protege relationship was professional development. Trouble shooting and problem solving skills were developed as well as receiving additional responsibilities and improved career awareness. The impact on the

mentors is obvious. Their role is powerful and effective in both their personal and professional development. Mentors had similar feelings regarding this experience. Peirce mentors for the most part gained satisfaction and benefited from the relationship. Being a mentor was seen as positive in terms of their development both professionally and personally. Overwhelmingly, the mentors indicated that the EESP is invaluable for retention and professional development of the students because it gives them support as well as a linking mechanism, training, and a transition into the world of work. Through the corporate mentors' eyes, this evaluation indicated that the consequences were overwhelmingly positive for the company, the students and the mentors themselves. In general, the EESP was seen as a beneficial for providing a transition for the student between the world of work and the world of school.

EESP, in conjunction with the Co-op program, further supports the success of school-to-work programs. As an additional benefit, students excelled who participated in both programs. They achieved the highest GPA's on average, and higher post program earning potential. It was assumed that EESP would be a natural feeder for the Co-op program, but it was discovered that many students opted to use their electives in order to continue their education to the baccalaureate level. Suggestions for implementation of a similar program would include allowing the program to follow its natural course. First actively recruit and inform staff, counselors and professors about the program, then be flexible, develop objectives that are measurable, tools which are appropriate, select a business education liaison who is committed to the program and skilled in the implementation of the program, while building fun into the relationship with students, mentors, employers, and staff.

Evaluation and Project Results:

The EESP is a natural partner for the school-to-work act. The legislation signed into law this year mandates a national/state-wide system for school-to-work. Peirce was invited to Pittsburgh, PA in August of this year to present information about the mentoring program to the Pennsylvania Association of Vocational Administrators. Additionally, The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Vocational-Technical Education has invited Peirce to make a presentation to The Conference on the Integration of Academic and Vocational-Technical Education: A Component of School Restructuring in November, 1994. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is extremely interested in the mentoring component of the program and will be inviting Peirce to submit a proposal in the future. Allocations for School-to-Work programs is projected to reach 36 million dollars.

Beginning in September of 1994, Peirce was awarded a Cooperative Education Grant by the Department of Education that is approved for five years, depending on the allocations made by congress to the program. The award of this money will enable Peirce to expand the current Cooperative Education program and employ features of EESP. During the original grant period, a video was produced. The video is an overview of the program and explains the components of the program. The video will be available at a nominal fee to help other educators design, or explore the formation of a similar program at their institution.

A portion of FIPSE funds were used for a corporate/employer/mentor breakfast that will be held on December 1, 1994 at the Union League in Philadelphia. The theme is recognition and recruitment. Employers and mentors who participated will be honored and new employers and mentors will learn about EESP and how they can participate. The Chamber of Commerce, the newly formed African American Chamber of Commerce of Philadelphia, other educator and community based organizations and other interested parties are also invited.

Part of the evaluation used students, corporate mentors and college mentors as subjects for evaluation. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis were used to answer questions with the data collected. The evaluation performed by Conway Associates found that 21 of 22 responses were positive when students were asked if EESP gave them the opportunity to reach their academic and career potential. Students included increased job skills, increased self-confidence and self awareness as attributes that EESP had developed. EESP participants cited increases in knowledge of the business world, the greater achievement of career learning goals, the integration of classroom and work experience, and the ability to secure a position upon graduation as gains they had made by completing the program. When salaries were compared by three groupings, those with EESP, those with Co-op, and those with no program, EESP ranked highest at $17,777. However, the most significant statistics are placement rates. This rate reflects either job placement, or transfer to a four year school, or alternative schooling upon graduation. In ascending order, EESP was 100%, Co-op was 85%, and no program was 32%, therefore indicating what a strong retention tool the program can be.

Mentors commented that the program made students feel more connected, special and supported, thereby fostering their development and enhancing retention. The transition between school-and-work was seen as valuable making academic work more relevant when coupled with work experience. The benefit to the mentor was improved through this relationship by forcing the mentor to be more aware of the business community and current trends. Many mentors expressed personal satisfaction because they were able to help.

Summary and Conclusions

Clearly, the EESP is a forerunner of the new School-to-Work legislation. In reviewing the results of the evaluation, students who are provided with school and work experience get higher grades, stay in college and complete their course of study, and can secure employment after graduation more easily. The importance of role models and mentors is evident. For first generation college students, the value of mentoring is vital to their success. Mentors provide the informal and important kinds of education such as assessing the corporate environment, protocol, problem solving and business etiquette. Traditionally, this kind of information is passed between colleagues and family members all the time. However, when a student is the first person in his/her family to attend college, or have a white collar job, parents many times do not know how to help their children, or what advice to give them. The mentor therefore enhances the parent's guidance, and offers

expertise through an ongoing relationship with the mentee.

It is apparent to faculty and staff that the school-to-work program will result in additional opportunities for students who participate. In keeping with this theme, the new Perkins plan awarded this year includes a career counseling component for Perkins students. The basic idea is to prepare them both academically and emotionally to participate in pre-co-op or EESP workshops and groups. Career exploration will be a major focus of this program and coordination with the Career Development Services will insure that all students know about and are prepared for school-to-work programs.

EESP has proved to be a win-win program for students, mentors, employers and the college. The partnerships and alliances that are formed through the program allow each sector of the school- to-work system to interact and improve upon the transition from college to the business world.

APPENDICES

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PEIRCE JUNIOR COLLEGE EARLY EMPLOYEE SELECTOR PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER, 1994

SUBMITTED TO THE EESP COORDINATOR

BY CLAIRE CONWAY, PH.D. PRIMARY EVALUATOR

&

MARY CONWAY, SECONDARY EVALUATOR

INTRODUCTION

This report assesses the efficacy of the Peirce EESP mentor program for the year 1993-94. The questions posed to address this project were: 1) How the coordination of the EESP was perceived by Peirce students, Peirce mentors, and corporate mentors who participated in the program in the last two years; 2) How did the EESP effect students in terms of the impact that the mentor component had on retention and placement rates, salaries and employment levels of graduating students, and networking possibilities for EESP participants.

Various methods of data collection and analysis were employed to answer these questions. Both the mentors and the student participants were considered sources of information for this report. In addition to the data presentation and analysis, this report also presents a summarized account of the EESP, conclusions resulting from the data, and suggestions for future data collection and analysis. In general, this evaluation examines EESP from the various perspectives determined by the underlying goals of the program. This evaluation was conducted and written by two independent consultants hired by Peirce Junior College.

I. EESP: History, Administration, Goals

As a result of the creative input of many sources, including area businesses, the Philadelphia High School Business Academy, Peirce administrators, faculty, and students, the Early Employee Selector Program (EESP) was created. The EESP began in 1991 in response to an increasing societal need to better prepare students for the world of work. Employment experts and policy makers alike have lamented the decline of skilled employees able to enter the work force. Central to the philosophy of EESP is the idea that students learn more from being involved with their field in

a mentee position, and that learning includes experiential, modelling, and written and verbal instruction. This program has the dual aims of helping students secure employment for which they are qualified after school, and to provide the Philadelphia area business community with highly skilled workers. As such, the framework for the ESSP rests on an interdependent relationship between the Peirce Junior College staff, the Philadelphia area business community and students. The EESP continues Peirce's tradition of balancing the needs of the students with Philadelphia's business community needs, but it adds a new dimension to that tradition in its focus on students who have heretofore been neglected.

During the three years since inception, the EESP has grown considerably. The program has been noticed and aspects of it replicated in several community colleges in Maryland. The business community's interest has also increased: between the 2nd and 3rd years employer participation has increased by 100%. This is certainly due in part to satisfaction with the program. In serving the businesses seeking an employee/mentee, the Registrar's Office conducts a computerized search according to the employer's criteria on the college's AS/400 computer system. The number of students participating has also increased: between the 2nd and third years 15 more students participated. A program of this nature requires on-going coordination and adjustment, and consequently, the program sought to correct itself through the use of continuous evaluation throughout the two year process.

The student/employee who is part of EESP has an advantage over many others competing for employment positions. First, mentoring is done by both the corporate contact and by a member of the Peirce community who provide time on a volunteer basis. This support in the form of two mentors is what separates the EESP from a co-operative program. Mentors have at least two separate formal sessions of training from Peirce, and their responses to the training were generally very

positive. In general, the Peirce staff coordinates a complex interdependent relationship benefitting students, employers, and other institutions seeking to model a successful Employment Program.

What follows in this report are sections addressing: Research Questions, Method, Data Analysis and Results, and Conclusions.

VI. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is guided by two major questions:

1) How the coordination of the EESP was perceived by Peirce students, Peirce mentors, and corporate mentors who participated in the program in the last two years.

2) How did the EESP, especially the mentor component, effect students in terms of retention and placement rates, salaries and employment levels of graduating students, and networking possibilities for EESP participants.

VII. METHOD

I. Sample

The sample for this evaluation was Peirce students, Peirce mentors, and corporate mentors. There were twenty-two students who completed the EESP and graduated. Thirty students initially began the program and the remaining eight did not complete it for a variety of reasons. Of the 22 subjects, there were 17 females and five males, 12 African-American and 10 Caucasian. Areas of concentration were office technology (7 students), para-legal studies (3), enterprise computing (3), business administration (2) and legal secretarial track (1). The average age of the students was 24.18 with one student of non-traditional age (43 years). The length of time that students participated in the EESP Program varied from the briefest of one

semester to the longest of four semesters. The average length of stay or length of time that students participated in the program was one and a half semesters.

II. Protocol (Data Collection/ Instruments/ Interviews)

Self-report instruments were used to access perceptions of the program, students, and mentors on a variety of relevant topics. In terms of the longitudinal aspect of the evaluation, students and mentors were asked to complete questionnaires both before they began the program and at the end of each semester. In addition to self-report questionnaires, the students were also interviewed at the end of their semester. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis were used to answer the questions with the data collected. These methods included content analysis, identification of themes, establishing means and standard deviations, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and a Chi Square test.

Data Analysis & Results

The analysis and presentation of data and results is organized according to the manner in which they answered each question. This section details the first research question: 1) How the coordination of the EESP was perceived by Peirce students, Peirce mentors, and corporate mentors who participated in the program in the last two years.

Summary and analysis of student and mentor data can be seen in tables A through C. These tables represent a summary of the evaluation process for the qualitative questions that were asked of students and the mentors. The evaluation is comprised of three major areas (Coordination, Components, and Quality of Mentor) and 23 specific items. Not all items were asked of all subjects. Where there are repeated items, comparisons across the three groups were made by examining the respective averages.

Table A: Mean scores from the EESP student and mentor evaluations for Coordination.

VARIABLE	STUDENT RESPONSES	PEIRCE MENTOR RESPONSES	CORPORATE MENTOR RESPONSES
	MEAN, X1	MEAN, X2	MEAN, X3
I. Coordination			
1. Coordination of EESP.		3.75	3.30
2. Sufficient number of job opportunities.	3.27		
3. Method of recruitment of students.	3.33		
4. Timeliness of correspondence.	3.33		3.41
5. Communication.	3.40	3.13	3.36
6. Dates and times of events.	3.18		

Table B: Mean scores from the EESP student and mentor evaluations on events/skills preparation.

VARIABLE	STUDENT RESPONSES	PEIRCE MENTOR RESPONSES	CORPORATE MENTOR RESPONSES
	MEAN, X1	MEAN, X2	MEAN, X3
II. Components			
7. Referral of protgee.		3.0	3.20
8. Interview Preparation.	3.63		
9. Peirce mentor.	3.13		
10. Annual Luncheon.	3.33	3.53	
11. Focus groups, mentor focus groups.	3.31	3.30	
12. Seminars.	3.37	3.72	
13. Field trips.	3.47		
14. Dinner with speaker; graduation and recognition.	3.57		
15. Quality of mentor training		3.56	3.18
16. Usefulness of mentor training		3.37	3.18

Table C: Mean scores from the EESP student and mentor evaluations on the Peirce mentor.

VARIABLE	STUDENT RESPONSES	PEIRCE MENTOR RESPONSES	CORPORATE MENTOR RESPONSES
	MEAN, X1	MEAN, X2	MEAN, X3
III. Quality of Mentor (Peirce)			
17. Quality of Peirce Mentor	3.22		
18. Effectiveness of Peirce mentor.	3.13		
19. Communication with Peirce mentor.	3.20		
20. Initiative in establishing relationship.	3.18		
21. Evaluation of progress.	3.18		
22. Role model.	3.22		
23. Use of EESP to acquire workers.			3.18

Means were calculated for each group within the sample along a Likert scale where students and mentors rank the items from one to four, one being the lowest and four being the highest. In general, it is evident that there are no means below 3.0, resulting in the conclusion that the coordination of the EESP was seen as very effective. The analysis will now examine each component separately.

The first major component of the evaluation, and the essence of Research Question one, was Coordination. Coordination as a construct was explored using questions addressing coordination, sufficient number of job opportunities, method of recruitment of students, timeliness of correspondence, communication, and dates and times of events. The highest mean on this table is given by the Peirce mentors and the 3.75 average for the coordination of the EESP speaks very highly of the coordination process. The corporate mentors rank this item highly also with a score of 3.3. As indicated in the table, in this category students answered five items, Peirce mentors answered two and Corporate mentors answered three. The students highest ranking for the Coordination of the program was communication (3.40). The Peirce mentors rated communication 3.13 and the Corporate mentors 3.36. Timeliness of correspondence was rated by students as 3.3 and by corporate mentors as 3.41. All of these scores are above average and speak highly of the coordination effort of the program.

The second major component of the evaluation is comprised of specific events/skill preparation which were implemented throughout the semester for the mentees and the mentors. None of these items were asked of all three groups. Therefore each group will be looked at separately. Students were asked to respond to seven items, numbers 8 to 14 on this table. Peirce mentors were asked to respond to 6 items of the 16 and Corporate mentors were asked to respond to 3 of the 16.

The highest rating for students in this table was Interview Preparation with a score of 3.63. This indicates that the Interview Preparation was valued and carried out well by the EESP personnel. The second highest mean is Dinner with the Speaker and Graduation at 3.57. This indicates the value and the meaningfulness of such events for the students. Career related Field trips were rated 3.47, Seminars were rated 3.37, the Annual Luncheon was rated 3.33.

Peirce mentors were asked to respond to 6 of the 16 items listed on the table. The highest score for this was the seminars with a 3.72. The lowest score was 3.0 which was for the Referral of Protege. They rated Quality of mentor training 3.56, Annual Luncheon 3.53, Usefulness of mentor training 3.37, and Mentor Focus groups 3.30. Corporate mentors also rated items highly: Referral of the Protege, 3.20; Quality of Mentor Training, 3.18; Usefulness of Mentor Training, 3.18.

The third and final component of the quantitative evaluation process carried out to examine the coordination of the EESP has to do with the quality of the Peirce mentor. This category is comprised of 7 items, numbers 17 to 23; six were only responded to by students and one was responded to by the Corporate mentors. This component examines the Peirce mentor from the view of the students. Students rated the quality, effectiveness, communication, initiative, evaluation and role-model aspects of the mentor. The Quality of the Peirce mentor and Role-model rated highest of these 6 items, with a mean of 3.22. Communication with the Peirce mentor was 3.0, while the lowest of the items was effectiveness of the Peirce mentor, rated 3.13. The Corporate mentors rated Use of EESP to acquire workers at 3.18.

The examination of the coordination of the EESP through open-ended questions which were part of the questionnaires will now be detailed. Each group will be reported upon separately followed by a synthesis of similarities and

differences across the groups. Content analysis was used to generate identified themes.

Students were asked 4 open-ended questions regarding the evaluation of the program. These questions dealt with the relationship between their academic and career paths as well as the effect that the mentoring relationship had on helping students attain their goals and acquiring new skills. The final question was looking at suggestions for the improvement of the EESP.

1. *Did the EESP give you the opportunity to reach your academic and career potential?*

Out of 22 responses , 21 were positive. Students were asked to comment after they answered Yes or No. Students cited many reasons why the EESP gave them the opportunity to reach their career potential. Reasons 'why' generally fell into 5 categories, including increased job skills, increased self-confidence and self-awareness, increased knowledge and awareness of the business world, achieving career learning goals including applying classroom training to work experience, and securing a position. Specific examples of each theme follow.

Six students cited increased job skills as the reason why the EESP was effective for them. Included in those responses were comments that referred to being given the experience to move on. One student cited that it gave them more experience in the world and another student cited that it "started a good foundation for my career.

Competence was mentioned as well as experience for future advancement. The next general category, Self-confidence, was cited by 5 students. Students specifically mentioned personal efficacy resulting from awareness as contributing to their confidence. This, in turn, enabled them to feel more in control and more in charge of their own careers. This also involved students being able to assess their own progress as well as the areas that they needed to improve upon. One student

said what I believe captured the essence of this theme: " I would not have known my career potential." Another student said, " I learned what I needed to improve upon."

The third category dealt with applying the classroom knowledge to work experience which in turn leads to the achievement of learning objectives and practical work experience. The responses that fall into this category generally focus on how the experience in the classroom became practical and "real" for the students as they applied it in their places of work. This in turn allowed them to reach their academic and learning objectives. One student said that because of this she decided to continue her academic effort.

The next category was cited as "to secure a position". Four students responded to this; that the EESP actually enabled them to reach their academic anc career potential by giving them a job and getting their "foot in the door". The final category was an increased awareness of the business world and connections with people in the business world. Three students felt that EESP enabled them to achieve their academic potential because it gave them an opportunity to meet new people and to discover what it means to work. As one student said, "Discover what it means to work and be exposed to careers in a broader sense, actually being involved in a career." Noteworthy in these responses is the student who said, "It has been a great learning experience." In general students found that the EESP overwhelmingly helped them to achieve their career and academic potential. Primarily by increasing their job skills, developing their self-confidence and increasing their awareness in the business world.

2. *How would you correlate the relationship between your work experience and your academic program?*

Ten responses to this question indicated a positive direct correlation between the EESP and the work experience. This was because the students could apply classroom theory to work experience. Examples included interpersonal skills, such as communicating appropriately with co-workers, and content domain skills such as better insights into the computer. Three specific responses illustrating this theme are: The EESP gives the student, " basic foundation for me to build a career"; "Peirce gets you ready for the real world." ; " I would say that Peirce and the EESP know what is going on in the world and they really prepare you well for it." Throughout the answers that fell into this category students repeatedly cited different ways in which the EESP is directly connected to the world of work. It is clear from these remarks that the EESP helped students on an as needed basis to prepare themselves for their future careers. One student in extolling and indicating an understanding of the work that goes into the program said, "The program and the work experience were both well organized."

Five respondents said there was a positive and direct correlation between the EESP and their work experience, but did not specify why. Two responses were negative in that one student saw that the courses did not correspond with her job, while another student said the work that she did was basic secretarial work and that she was looking for more computer work. So 2 out of 17 responses were negative, indicating that in general the student population saw a direct positive relationship between their work experience and the academic program.

3. How did the mentoring relationships (work and Peirce) assist you in obtaining your goals and acquiring new skills?

The answers to this question fell into two categories. The first category was support, encouragement or " being there". Fourteen respondents specifically stated that the mentor relationship helped, assisted or encouraged them. Specific ways

that help was offered included these categories: Some students said that mentors helped them in "making difficult choices easier and offered relevant preparation and continuing encouragement"; "Helped me with career objectives and personal life and gave me encouragement,"; "Contributed a lot to success , helped me,"; "Was always there when I needed her. " One student said that, "without my mentors I would be lost." Another answered, "I need it."

The second theme that emerged from the data was trouble shooting or problem solving skills at work and an increased awareness of this process. This included 9 responses and specifically referred to on the job issues which the mentor educated or informed the mentee about. As one student said, "One on one communication is essential during your introductory stage at your new job." Another said, "Was given more responsibility and learned more about the career." One student offered this statement, "The mentor made me aware of what my boss expected of me as far as work and also as to what I could aspire to." Summing up the role of the mentor as an information educator, informal educator, trouble shooter is the student who said, "Questions which I have never faced before were answered from mentors who experienced my questions. " The role of the mentor from this particular perspective was clear. The support and trouble shooting component of the mentor role were seen as very powerful and effective in helping students acquire their new skills. Students did not, however, differentiate in the answers between the Peirce mentor and the work mentor. It would be helpful in terms of research purposes to separate the question and ask students the question twice in reference to each mentor.

4. Please make any suggestions for improvement of the EESP.

Twelve responses were given to this question, 6 of which suggested to continue the program as it is going because it is a "great program", "You are doing a wonderful job. Keep up the good work." Other responses indicated that the EESP is a significant form of assistance for students, providing them with great opportunities. Six suggestions which fall into the category of logistics (for example, paper work and times of meeting and focus groups) were also mentioned. Other concerns involved requests for increases in: preparation for students to communicate, corporate involvement and emphasis on work mentor responsibility. Two people asked that the questionnaires be shorter and also that there should be less paperwork to fill out. One suggestion was that students should be mentored before going to work. The qualitative data analyzed here indicate that students felt that the mentor component helped them with their academic and career advancement. In general students reported satisfaction with the program, noting it serves well in assisting students making the transition between the world of school and the world of work.

The next section examines the perspective of the Peirce mentor on the coordination of the EESP. This group was asked to complete 4 open-ended questions that dealt with their perceptions and their attitudes about the EESP.

1. How did you benefit from the mentoring relationship?

Eleven participants responded to this question. Of those eight were positive. Of those eight, there were two reasons provided: personal and professional. Three mentors responded that they did not have positive experiences with the program.

The positive personal responses related to the satisfaction that Peirce mentors experienced by being able to have helped someone develop. As one woman said, "A

joy for me to work with one young woman and see the 'world of work' with her new eyes." Another Peirce mentor said, "It was an opportunity to positively impact a student's career development." An interesting point of view was cited by a Peirce mentor who says, "They were able to learn from Irene, the student, as an individual." The positive business/professional theme illustrated the effect of the Peirce mentor becoming more aware of the business community, including "stretching" them and keeping them current with exposure to the business community. One Peirce mentor expressed this by saying, " It connected me with the business/education linkage." Another respondent said, "It helps in my teaching of others to keep me fresh and up to date." The mentors who did not benefit from the relationship either did not offer any explanations (2) or said that they didn't have the opportunity to meet with their protege (1).

2. *Please describe the value of the EESP for student development and retention from your point of view.*

Two themes were central to this question. One was that it made students feel connected, special, supported and therefore helps them to be motivated (8). The second theme addressed the concept of providing training or information to help students' transition into the world of work (6). This category focused on the notion of "personalized attention" which made students feel special and therefore more focused and motivated to continue their career path. Another effect of this special personalized attention is that students can be looked after by one who really cares and also that they develop an increased sense of purpose and self-esteem with their career direction. One respondent said, "Everyone wants/deserves to feel special ... to be looked after by one person who really cares- that's mentoring." The majority of Peirce mentors who responded to this question see that the value for retention and

development is hinged upon personalizing the attention that students get and need at this juncture in their career path. This personalized attention has far-reaching effects on both the students' internal world (self-esteem) and also on their future goals and direction. The second category was comprised of six responses and deals with the aspect of training and information dissemination which provides for a transition into the world of work. Responses in this category mainly illustrate students receiving training and experience so that they can make a smooth transition into employment from the world of school. The value of the EESP for retention and development also is contingent upon the appeal of students being able to secure immediate employment after school. This is seen as a byproduct of the EESP and a good marketing tool to recruit and retain students. These responses indicate that there is a sense that the EESP provides something that is otherwise absent in most academic programs, specifically the transition period into the work force with an established support system and relevant course work. The transition process is cited frequently in these responses and is perceived as an invaluable aspect of the program.

3. *What improvements would you suggest for EESP?*

There were 7 responses which included suggestions of increased mentor information, and more thorough protege introduction/training. All 7 of these responses requested some better, more formalized way of establishing the mentor relationship early on in the beginning of the semester. Some specifics included a formal introductory session arranged by the EESP coordinator; a background biography distributed regarding where the mentees were working; bringing mentors and proteges together to have that initial contact in a non-threatening environment. It seems clear that the connection between the Peirce mentors and

their proteges initially seems to be weak or too informal, and that the mentors themselves are asking for more structure in being introduced to their proteges. Three suggestions deal with the scheduling of events and logistics: requests that field trips be scheduled on weekends; time changes for meetings; summer meeting to discuss the PJC guidelines. Three responses address fine tuning processes such as marketing and protege selection: a suggestion that field trips be more relevant to education and work development; that Peirce mentors must play a larger role in students participation.; a suggestion to utilize students themselves to market the program. One person responded that they felt that the program didn't need any improvement.

4. Would you be interested in having the opportunity to participate in the program's curriculum for the purpose of improving the program?

Fourteen respondents answered Yes, while two others did not answer the question.

The value of the EESP from the perspective of the Peirce mentors is clearly seen in the aforementioned data analysis. For the most part the mentors gained satisfaction and benefitted from the relationship. Being a mentor was seen as positive in terms of the participants' development both professionally and personally. Overwhelmingly the mentors indicated that the EESP is invaluable for retention and development of students because it gives them support as well as a linking mechanism by providing training allowing students to transition into the world of work. Improvements that were most often cited had to deal with the introduction process of the mentor and their protege.

The next point of view is that of the corporate mentor. The corporate mentors were asked to complete 8 open-ended questions on a questionaire regarding their

overall perspective of the EESP .

1. How did the mentoring experience benefit you, and your company? How did the relationship benefit the student?

The overall benefits cited by the corporate mentors were future oriented. Generally the responses recognized the long term benefits. For example, the mentor relationship can have the effect of increasing mentee confidence, resulting in more helpful recommendations to the organization than a mentee who is insecure. One mentor said that the organization benefits in the long term by the work the employee accomplishes and the work arrangement can be on a trial basis to determine if the protege would be suitable for full-time employment. Two respondents said that the organization benefitted from new ideas and innovations that the protege contributed to the firm. Two respondents indicated that the experience was a method of assessing the ability of the protege, and where their skills would be best utilized within the organization during this period. One respondent saw the benefit of the EESP mentoring component as "establishment of a partnership ...that promotes a harmony ... fosters a rewarding framework of efficiency and professionalism."

The corporate mentors were asked how the student benefitted from the relationship. The responses basically centered around the impact that being in a working environment had in terms of acquiring specific skills relevant to one's career path in practical terms. This in turn enabled students to feel more comfortable in the working world, and helped them become a professional. Mentors also mentioned the opportunity to problem solve with the student about their career choices. A number of responses pointed to how the student would more accurately assess their career choice and whether a job offer would be a desirable one. The majority of these responses clearly view the benefit to the student as affording

them the simultaneous opportunity of the worlds of work and school, and making the links between the two for them. When asked about benefits to the mentors, responses fall into two general categories which are similar to the Peirce mentor responses: personal and professional. A personal benefit for the corporate mentors was the most frequently identified theme. Personal satisfaction, including seeing the protege grow; helping them develop good skills; and the protegees eagerness to learn and respect. Professional development or professional benefits included the concept that it helped the mentor in their own professional world. One mentor said that she benefitted tremendously from the assistance of the protege and was grateful that the student could handle the situations for her. Another professional benefit was that the mentor took advantage of the events and advising provided by the program and the training. One mentor stated that after doing the same work for years the enthusiasm demonstrated by her protege actually "motivated me again." Two responses were not positive. One mentor assessed their contribution as less than optimal and felt that they could have done a better job with the mentoring process. Another mentor felt that the student did not desire or need a mentor and that the mentor was responsible for keeping the relationship connected or coordinating the relationship. In general, the corporate mentors believed that the EESP benefitted the company, the student and the mentor for different reasons.

2. *Did the mentoring relationship help you to retain the student as an employee?*

Five mentors responded Yes because they were retained as employees. Three respondents suggested that if the position was available that they would consider hiring the student on a trial basis or offering them the job. One respondent cited that they are in the process of considering doing this.

3. Were sufficient mentors available for the students? If No, why not?

Eleven respondents cited Yes. Eight responded not applicable or unknown.

4. Were sufficient numbers of qualified students referred to you by Peirce Junior College to participate in the Early Employee Selector Program? Please comment on quality and quantity of students.

The majority of the mentors noted that they were satisfied and benefitted from the Peirce students. Nine mentors wrote not applicable in terms of quality. One mentor cited that they had great success with Peirce students. Students seemed to adapt well to the working environment and provide much needed office support. This particular mentor goes on to say that they are requesting an exception to the hiring freeze in order to permanently hire all three of their graduating Peirce students. One mentor saw that all the students were good and they all seemed enthusiastic. Three respondents noted that there was some disparity in terms of the quality of the students. One mentor said that one of the students interviewed was not satisfactory due to their dress attire. The majority of the mentors see the quality of the Peirce mentors as quite satisfactory. Of the four mentors who addressed the quantity question, three viewed the quantity as satisfactory.

5. Were you able to accept this student for a coop position?

Ten mentors responded Yes. Seven responded that it was not applicable.

6. Are you able to offer this student a full-time permanent position with benefits upon graduation?

Six mentors responded Yes. Three of those detailed their statements indicating they were taking pro-active steps to find a position for the protege in their

organizations. (Two said that they were searching for a position. One was requesting an exception to a hiring freeze.) Six respondents answered No to this question. Of those, two explained that the student had chosen to continue their education, while four noted that it was due to a freeze in hiring. Six mentors answered not applicable

7. Would you be interested in having the opportunity to participate in the program's curricular planning for purposes of improving the process?

Three respondents answered that they did participate in the program for improvement and that they would like to continue. Nine respondents did not answer. Six respondents said that they were not interested at the present time.

8. A section of the evaluation for additional comments was provided.

In this section 7 corporate mentors gave positive feedback and their answers generally address students' contribution to the organization, the qualities of the EESP (including coordination), and the benefits which the company received from participating in the program. One mentor said that the EESP helped to streamline a hiring practice of suitably trained candidates. Another mentor noted with pride that one of the proteges did a presentation of which the direct supervisor and the mentor were very proud. Additionally, a mentor commented on the ease with which they are able to work with Peirce Junior College, especially Leslie Gladden, and said that Peirce was the best supplier of associate degree students. One mentor was impressed with the EESP and felt that her personal contacts with her protege were satisfying. Four of these comments expressed positive feelings about having students work with their organization because of their cooperative and responsible nature and their pleasant and positive personality in the work force. Other comments suggesting improvement and areas in need of attention include: Students needed to

make an increased effort to deal with the mentors since the relationships seemed too one-sided; Increase in the amount of contact between Peirce and the company.

This evaluation of the coordination of the mentor component by the corporate mentor indicates that the consequences were overwhelmingly positive for the company, the student, and the mentors themselves. In general, the EESP was seen as a benefit for providing a transition for the student between the world of school and the world of work. It also benefitted the company by allowing an organization the time to assess whether a potential job candidate is suitable for the organization, and to identify strong job candidates into a position that is satisfactory for their particular skills. The majority of respondents said that they would try to find a full-time job for the student and recognized that in the current employment market this is a significant and important affirmation of the effectiveness of the EESP. The questions asked of both the corporate mentor and the Peirce mentor pertain to whether or not they would be willing to participate in future curriculum designs. It's interesting to note that the majority of the Peirce mentors cited that they would while the majority of the corporate mentors said that they would not be interested. The Peirce mentors cited that the initial introductory process was an area that they would recommend needed more formalized attention. The suggestions from the corporate mentors focused on the mentor/mentee relationship and that increased effort on the part of the student would assist the program. There was great similarity between the Peirce and corporate mentors regarding benefits of the program: they indicated both professional and personal reasons.

The Second research question will now be addressed: 2) How did the EESP effect students in general and specifically in terms of the impact that the mentor component had on retention and placement rates, salaries and employment levels

of graduating students, and networking possibilities for EESP participants.

This question was explored through three different analyses along various measures. The first analysis presented are the results of students self-assessments, followed by the analysis of interviews conducted at the end of the students' participation in EESP by the coordinator of the program.

Thirdly, a comparison across three groups of students, the EESP participants (including those students who participated ib both the EESP and COOP), COOP only students, and students who didn't participate in either the EESP or the COOP program is presented.

The first data to be presented are the results of the students self-assessment of the work experience. Students completed an assessment of the work experience which was comprised of open-ended questions and a three part ranked questionaire consisting of 23 items. The three components are quality of work experience, quality of work mentor, and personal assessment. The means for these 23 items are presented in Tables D, E and F.

Table D: Students evaluation of Quality of work experience.		
N=22	**MEAN**	**SD**
I. Quality of work experience.		
1. Adequate supervision.	3.36	.65
2. Resources for learning.	3.31	.71
3. Training provided.	3.38	.80
4. Meaningful work tasks.	3.31	.71
5. Responsibility given.	3.64	.90
6. Increased responsiblity.	3.13	.94

Table E: Comparison of means from students' evaluation of the Peirce and Corporate mentors.

N=22	**MEAN**	**MEAN**
II. Quality of Mentor	Corporate Mentor	Peirce Mentor
7. Quality of work mentor.	3.47	3.22
8. Effectiveness of mentor.	3.40	3.13
9. Orientation to company.	3.35	
10. Development of training plan.	3.25	
11. Evaluation of progress.	3.30	3.18
12. Communication.	3.20	3.20
13. Role model.	3.10	3.22
14. Initiative in establishing relationship.		3.18

Table F: EESP students' self assessment results.

N=22	MEAN	SD
III. Personal Assessment		
14. Definition of career goal.	3.40	.68
15. Preparation for the world of work.	3.55	.75
16. Personal career awareness.	3.55	.75
17. Acquisition of new job skills.	3.50	.60
18. Improvement of adaptable/functional skills.	3.65	.48

The means for the 6 Quality of Work experience items are all above 3.1. The highest is Responsibility given to the student (3.64). It is interesting to note that the lowest mean for these items was Increased responsibility (3.13), indicating perhaps that while students were given responsibility on their job, this responsibility level didn't increase as much as they would have liked. Adequate supervision (3.36), Resources for learning (3.31), Training provided (3.38) and Meaningful work tasks all had a average score above 3.3. These scores point to the perception held by students that the EESP work experience was both strong and positive.

The second major component of the students' evaluation of the work experience dealt with the quality of their mentors.

Table E contains the results of the mean scores for items 7 through 14, pertaining to the Quality of the mentors. Five of the eight items contained in the Quality of mentor section were asked about both the corporate and Peirce mentors. Two items were asked only about the corporate mentor and one was solely asked about the Peirce mentor. Three of the 5 means on items asked about both mentors were higher for the corporate mentors. These included quality of the mentor, effectiveness of the mentor and evaluation of progress. One item, role model yielded a higher mean score for the Peirce rather than the corporate mentor. Communication tied with a mean of 3.20 for both the corporate and Peirce mentors. Orientation to company and Development of training plan only pertained to the corporate mentor situation. Their mean scores were 3.35 and 3.25, respectively. Initiative in establishing a relationship was only asked of the Peirce mentors and had one of the lowest scores (3.18). From examining these means, it appears that the student's perception of the work mentor was they were perhaps more engaged in the process and more proactive. However, it's interesting to note that the Peirce mentors were seen as stronger role models than the corporate mentors for the EESP

students. The differences in these scores is perhaps indicative of a relationship with another in the same community, in this case Peirce. Whereas the corporate mentors might seem more distant from the students' experience and perhaps less tangible. The highest mean score was Quality of the mentor(3.47), followed by Effectiveness of the work mentor (3.40), and Evaluation of progress (3.30). In general the EESP students believed that the quality of their work mentors and Peirce mentors was between good and excellent.

The third component of the students' assessment dealt with a personal assessment comprised of items 14 through 18. All of the means for these items was above 3.39. The highest mean was Improvement of adaptable functional skills (3.65). The results presented in F. The lowest mean score was Definition of career goal (3.40). It is clear in looking at these means, students felt that the program enabled them to define their clear goals, prepare them well for the world of work, increase their personal awareness and acquisition of new job skills as well as improvement of adaptable and functional skills. In other words, from the students' point of view the effects of the EESP were very powerful and positive.

This section details the experiences of the Pierce EESP students, as measured by their self-report in interviews with Leslie Gladden. Each topic was represented by a question asked of the participants. What follows here is a summary of these individual responses. Overwhelmingly, the experience of the participants was a positive and practical one.

What did you accomplish by participating in Peirce's EESP?

Each respondent indicated a number of positive consequences of being involved with this program. These included becoming employed either full or

part-time, permanently or temporarily. Indicating that the acquisition of a job was not the sole purpose of the program, many respondents noted that they would be able to handle many types of jobs, interviews, and situations as a consequence of their experience. Even when the employment was temporary, the respondents indicated that the experience of actually going to a job provided invaluable insights, and experience into the world of work. These insights and experiences, as reported by the participants, led to an increased sense of self-confidence regarding work in the future. One student reported that she learned the intangible value of "office etiquette", and "what's expected of me". Others reported that the professionalism of the experience helped significantly. In general, students seemed more comfortable with themselves as team members, employees, and service providers.

The reciprocal nature of the program was repeatedly noted by the participants. The relationship of work tasks to school assignments was clear and obviously relevant. One respondent whose words were echoed by many others said, "I got to put into practice what I was going to school for... Now I know I can do the job.". Additionally, respondents indicated that the material learned in school was current and up to date as measured by what the workplace was using in terms of technology. Students also were made aware of the skills they already possessed upon entering the program. Often, the student said that he/she "enhanced " their skills in the Program, increasing their entry level status.

How has EESP influenced your career goals?

Without exception the students who participated in this program were influenced regarding their career goals as a result of their participation. Many students indicated that the decision made prior to entering Pierce was confirmed through the program. This was the result of having practical hands-on experience

with the job they chose, thereby giving new information to help solidify the decision. In addition to this sense of confirmation of the choice made, students also reported a great deal of encouragement for their efforts and choices. Other students reported that the experience opened up new possibilities that they had not previously considered. This happened in at least 3 instances because of an expanded sense of the students own skills. And finally, more than one student indicated that the program influenced their career goals by influencing them to continue going to school to further their career possibilities. One student will be going to law school, saying, "I guess I want bigger things now."

How did this work experience correlate with your academic program and career objectives?

(This question was not always understood by the respondents, as indicated by answers that were irrelevant. Those responses were, when appropriate, included in the summaries of other questions.)

Nearly every student responded with an emphatic positive answer to this question. This is consistent with answers to question #1 where students indicated the benefits of working within a successfully reciprocal and up to date program. Some responses indicting the value of the correlation follow. "I wouldn't know what I was doing if I hadn't taken that class." "Everything went together."

How did the mentoring relationship, your work and Perice assist you in attaining your goals and acquiring your skills?

Overwhelmingly the students benefited from the mentoring relationships. The work mentor was more often cited as a source of support, but the Pierce mentor was perceived as available if necessary. What students received in the way of

support, advice, and encouragement from their work mentors appears to be invaluable to them. Frequently students reported that what they learned were life-long problem-solving skills, including interpersonal skills, rather than just technical information. Advice from the mentors was described as guidance that wasn't overbearing, and directly helpful. The individual relationship appears to have facilitated learning. One student reported that ,"learning was trial and error...and the mentor was very patient and helped me everyday." One student reported that her mentor, "took me under the wing, showed me the ropes." Finally nearly every student mentioned the practical aspect of the experience, indicting that the chosen goal was nearer simply because of participation.

How would you rate your preparation for the world of work?

The answer to this question was overwhelmingly positive. Every student but one (who has indicated that she will be changing careers, and hasn't yet been trained in her new chosen field) reported that they felt confident and well prepared.

What would help you be better prepared?

Students had little information here, perhaps because they felt well prepared. For more information see question regarding courses the students would like to add.

Which courses were especially helpful or relevant?

QSM, Management courses in general, Excel,Writing Typing, Grammar, Lotus, Computer courses in general.

What courses do you think should be added?

What legal secretaries do, communication skills, Dictaphone, Lotus (this was included although other respondents noted it as being offered)

What type of work skills and personal characteristics do you have to offer an employer?What are some of the work tasks you learned?

The Pierce graduate has a considerable amount to offer an employer, and they are aware of those assets and can articulate them. Specific tasks that students were able to perform included: organizing a filing system; working collectively on projects; equipment mastery; various legal skills including filing complex forms, the court filing system, drafting a document; communication skills including phone work, typing, interpersonal ease, writing clearly, format for business correspondence; computer skills including word processing, spreadsheet, dBase; maintaining an inventory;

"People skills", as one respondent termed them, were also affected by participation. Having hands-on work experience provided them with invaluable lessons regarding unspoken rules of office etiquette, interpersonal communication, and professional environments. This knowledge seems to be related to the increased confidence the students reported following participation. Other skills that were mentioned include efficiency, friendliness, intelligence, ability to work on deadline, hardworking, ability to organize, investigate, interview, risk-taking, and the ability to maintain until the task or problem is solved or completed.

The third component of this evaluation examined the effects of the EESP on retention and placement rates, salaries and employment levels of graduating students, and networking possibilities for EESP participants. The effects of the EESP on these factors will be examined by comparing three student pools. The three groups are comprised of; 1) EESP and/or both EESP and COOP participants, 2) COOP only participants and 3) students who didn't participate in either program. Two

stratified samples were selected from the larger groups of COOP and no program students when statistical tests were performed. Data for this component of the evaluation was obtained from a variety of sources including graduate and post graduate surveys administered by the Career Development Services office. Retention rates are examined first followed by comparisons of placement and employment rates. Levels of employment are considered followed by the networking opportunities for EESP students in their current positions.

The effect of the EESP on retention rates is examined by comparing the overall institutional rate to the EESP rate of retention. It is important to note here that comparing COOP only students to the EESP group with respect to retention would not be appropriate because while COOP is a credit bearing program, EESP is not and therefore, a simple comparison would most likely present a skewed perspective.

Retention rates for the overall institution in 1994 were 86% according to a school wide assessment. This rate reflects an increase of 36% since 1990. Comparatively, retention rates for the EESP participants in 1994 was 73%. That is to say that 22 of the original 30 students who began the EESP completed the program. However, knowing why students dropped out warrants investigation since the sample size is relatively small compared to the overall student group. Reasons why students did not complete the EESP fell into a variety of categories including medical (3), shortage of available work (2), dissatisfaction with the job (1), and transfer to a 4 year program (1). Since only one student left because of dissatisfaction with the work itself, the overall retention rate for the EESP students speaks highly of the efficacy of the program to meet students needs. Another interesting aspect of this data is that the overall institutional retention rate increased by 36% during the

three years that EESP was offered in the school. While ascribing a direct causal relationship between these two incidents is not within the scope of this evaluation, it is important to consider the possibility that the EESP had some impact on the increase in the overall retention rate increase since 1991. Placement rates offer further insight into the effects of the EESP beyond retention.

Placement is determined by the number of students who were either working or continuing their education at a four year school. Placement rates of graduating students were compared across the three pools of student groups. Data was obtained for this analysis from a graduate survey completed by 165 of the 225 graduating class of 1994. The majority of graduating students (63%) reported they were employed, and 28% were continuing their education, bringing the total placement rate to 91%. Stratifying the overall population and examining these placement rates clearly points to the efficacy of the EESP. All twenty-two of the EESP participants who completed the program were either employed or continuing their education upon graduation. This was followed by 85% of the 70 COOP students and 32% of the 73 students who didn't participate in any program. In order to test for statistical significance among these differences, a Chi Square test was conducted to measure the strength of the effects of the EESP on employment rates across the three groups. The results of the Chi Square analysis indicate that there is a significant relationship between the type of program students participated in during their educational career and their rate of employment at graduation ($X2=7.33$, $df=2$, $p=.026$). Specifically, participation in the EESP has a significant relationship when compared to the other groups on obtaining employment upon graduation.

While employment levels provide understanding of the effects of the EESP, further insight is gleaned through a comparison of salaries across the three groups.

Table G contains the summary statistics for the salary ranges of the three groups.

Table G: Salary ranges for EESP, COOP and No Program Students.

	N	X	RANGE
EESP	17	$17,777.	14,520.
COOP	26	$15,545.	14,600.
NO PROGRAM	48	$17,598.	46,000.

Initial examination of the data indicates that the average salary for the EESP group is highest, followed by the no program group and the COOP group. The range among these groups points to a wide discrepancy in salaries among the no program group, compared to the ranges of the EESP and COOP groups which are relatively close. In order to account for this discrepancy, two random samples were selected from the COOP and no program group for the following analysis. In order to test for significance of the effects of the EESP on salaries, an analysis of variance was conducted among the three groups. The results of the analysis indicated that enrollment in EESP did not create a significant difference in the salaries earned at the time of graduation ($F = 2.089$, $df = 2.58$, $p = 0.15$). From the above analyses, it is apparent that participating in the EESP provided a significant advantage to students in securing employment when compared to the other student groups. However salaries among the three groups were not significantly higher due to participation in the EESP.

The final aspect of this investigation explores the effects if the EESP on the future career paths of students by comparing job levels among graduating students across the three pools followed by networking possibilities of EESP students. Among all students employed at graduation, the overwhelming majority of jobs were categorized as entry level positions. Specifically, jobs reported by the EESP participants included secretarial (8), office assistant/clerk (3), sales & leader associates (2), technician (1) and management assistant (1). This same profile held true for the other pools of students with the exception of one student who reported being self employed from the no program group.

The final analysis focused on the effects of the EESP on networking opportunities for EESP participants. Data was obtained from the post graduate survey, in which students rated their networking opportunities from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent) within their current working environments. The average response from 17 students was 3.58, indicating that students of the EESP perceive their networking possibilities as excellent.

Thus far, analyses from the third section of the evaluation indicate that there is an advantage in securing employment for students who participate in the EESP when compared to the student population at large. Additionally, while differences among salaries from the three student pools didn't reach significance, salaries for the EESP students were on average slightly higher. Additionally, effects on retention rates of the EESP warrants further investigation since the inception of the EESP occurred during the same period of time when the overall institutional retention rate increased by 38%. Job levels among the three groups are relatively homogenous and EESP participants view their networking possibilities as excellent.

For the purposes of consistency between the original EESP proposal and this evaluation, mention is made here of an original research question which was not

heretofore discussed. Originally included in the EESP proposal an examination of the promotions and career ladder opportunities at the end of one year on the job was prescribed. *While this type of analysis is crucial for measuring the long term* effects of the EESP, the time constraints of this evaluation process preclude this type of longitudinal approach.

DISCUSSION

This discussion will be in three parts: Summary and elaboration of results, future directions for EESP implementation that are suggested from these results, and suggestions for future data collection and analysis.

I. Summary and Elaboration of Results

In general the Peirce EESP is a nearly unbridled success. This success can be described in a number of ways. Thirty students began the EESP and 22 of those completed and graduated. This is a percentage which was relatively high considering the rates of attrition in universities and colleges today. The EESP is seen as an invaluable aspect for retention and development for students at Peirce Junior College partly because students who participate in the EESP are more likely than other students to secure employment upon graduation.

This program seems to work because of both internal and external components in which students are made to feel special, therefore increasing self-esteem, self-motivation, and focus, coupled with the training and practical skills for the transition into the world of work.

II. Future Directions for EESP

When the corporate mentors were asked to rate the Referral of the Protege their mean was 3.20, reflecting the mean score of the Peirce mentors, indicating that

perhaps work can be done around the way in which referrals and introductions are carried out for proteges. There seems to be a discrepancy in terms of the mentor training, its quality and usefulness in both the Peirce mentors and the Corporate mentors. The Peirce mentors rank both the quality of the mentor training and the usefulness of the training higher than the Corporate mentors. It would be helpful to ascertain why that is. Perhaps the training is speaking to the needs of the Peirce mentor community more than to the needs of the Corporate mentor community.

The students' perception of the Peirce mentor's effectiveness is the lower means of the entire questionnaire. Perhaps a recommendation that would follow would be to dialogue with students and Peirce mentors in some formalized way throughout the semester so that one could ascertain what is working and what is not working in the relationship or in the coordination and in the logistics of the program. Probably the area that seems to need attention the most would be the referral of the protege of the Peirce mentor. More attention should be paid to examining the relationship of the Peirce mentor to the student and trying to infuse it with some positive energy or perhaps coach the Peirce mentors more directly.

III. Suggestions for Future Data collection

Generally, data collection for future evaluations should be executed in a more systematic fashion. Some of these deficits were related to personnel changes during the duration of the program. Other reasons seem to be a lack of a designated personnel responsible for the systematic collection of data. This evaluation suggests that a standardized data collection method be implemented such that relevant information would be made available regardless of personnel changes. Some of the shortcomings of this situation include pre and post measures which were not similar enough to run statistical tests on, resulting in increased difficulty to draw hard conclusions. Other obstacles for data analysis were in the form of

inconsistently asked questions within and across the three groups. For instance, in one section of an instrument students were not asked to differentiate in their answers between the Peirce and the work mentor. Perhaps consideration could be given to creating a position within the EESP, or Peirce community to serve as a resource for research methods.